

FIRST NIAGARA FINANCIAL GROUP INC

Form 425

December 17, 2015

Explanatory Note: The following communication was issued by KeyCorp to its employees. Filed by KeyCorp

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Subject Company: First Niagara Financial Group, Inc.

Filer's SEC File No.: 001-11302

Date: December 17, 2015

Subject: Better Together: KeyBank and First Niagara Announce Retention and Expansion of FNFG's Mortgage Business

To: All KeyBank Employees

As Gary Crosby and I have shared over the prior weeks, there are many reasons to be excited about the future combination of KeyBank and First Niagara. Today, we are pleased to share a major announcement.

As you know, earlier this year Key announced plans to bring our mortgage business, including fulfillment operations, back into the organization, while continuing to outsource servicing. We have made significant progress on this initiative and are in the midst of our plan to begin offering our mortgage product in 2016.

However, the upcoming combination of KeyBank and First Niagara has created an exciting opportunity for the combined organization to leverage and expand on First Niagara's existing mortgage operations (consisting of in-house fulfillment and all elements of servicing) in both Buffalo, N.Y., and New Haven, Conn.

Upon completion of the merger in the third quarter of 2016, KeyBank will integrate First Niagara's highly regarded mortgage operations into KeyBank's offering.

Retaining and building upon the knowledge and experience of the employees within First Niagara's mortgage operations provides opportunities in Buffalo and New Haven for jobs and scalability to support the overall incremental transactional volume resulting from the merger.

This is the first of many important business decisions related to the combination of KeyBank and First Niagara. We look forward to more opportunities ahead.

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IMPORTANT ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND WHERE TO FIND IT

In connection with the proposed merger, KeyCorp will file with the SEC a Registration Statement on Form S-4 that will include the Joint Proxy Statement of KeyCorp and First Niagara and a Prospectus of KeyCorp, as well as other relevant documents concerning the proposed transaction. This communication does not constitute an offer to sell or the solicitation of an offer to buy any securities or a solicitation of any vote or approval. **INVESTORS AND SHAREHOLDERS ARE URGED TO READ THE REGISTRATION STATEMENT AND THE JOINT PROXY STATEMENT/PROSPECTUS REGARDING THE MERGER WHEN IT BECOMES AVAILABLE AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT DOCUMENTS FILED WITH THE SEC, AS WELL AS ANY AMENDMENTS OR SUPPLEMENTS TO THOSE DOCUMENTS, BECAUSE THEY WILL CONTAIN IMPORTANT INFORMATION.**

A free copy of the Joint Proxy Statement/Prospectus, as well as other filings containing information about KeyCorp and First Niagara, may be obtained at the SEC's Internet site (<http://www.sec.gov>). You will also be able to obtain these documents, free of charge, from KeyCorp at investor.key.com or from First Niagara by accessing First Niagara's website at www.firstniagara.com. Copies of the Joint Proxy Statement/Prospectus can also be obtained, free of charge, by directing a request to KeyCorp Investor Relations at Investor Relations, KeyCorp, 127 Public Square, Mailcode OH-01-27-0737, Cleveland, Ohio 44114-1306, by calling (216) 689-3000, or by sending an e-mail to investor_relations@keybank.com or to First Niagara Investor Relations at 726 Exchange Street, Suite 618, Buffalo, New York 14210, by calling (716) 819-5669 or by sending an e-mail to investor@fnfg.com. In addition, KeyCorp and First Niagara use their respective Investor Relations websites and social media outlets as channels of distribution of material company information. Such information is accessible on KeyCorp's and First Niagara's Investor Relations websites, as well as on their respective Facebook pages and through their Twitter accounts and LinkedIn accounts.

KeyCorp and First Niagara and certain of their respective directors and executive officers may be deemed to be participants in the solicitation of proxies from the respective shareholders of KeyCorp and First Niagara in respect of the transaction described in the Joint Proxy Statement/Prospectus. Information regarding KeyCorp's directors and executive officers is contained in KeyCorp's Proxy Statement on Schedule 14A, dated April 7, 2015, which is filed with the SEC. Information regarding First Niagara's directors and executive officers is contained in First Niagara's Proxy Statement on Schedule 14A, dated March 23, 2015, which is filed with the SEC. Additional information regarding the interests of those participants and other persons who may be deemed participants in the transaction may be obtained by reading the Joint Proxy Statement/Prospectus regarding the proposed merger when it becomes available. Free copies of this document may be obtained as described in the preceding paragraph.

FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS

This communication contains forward-looking statements within the meaning of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995 including, but not limited to, KeyCorp's and First Niagara's expectations or predictions of future financial or business performance or conditions. Forward-looking statements are typically identified by words such as believe, expect, anticipate, intend, target, estimate, continue, positions, plan, predict, project, objective, prospects, possible or potential, by future conditional verbs such as assume, will, would, should, may, or by variations of such words or by similar expressions. These forward-looking statements are subject to numerous assumptions, risks and uncertainties, which change over time. Forward-looking statements speak only as of the date they are made and we assume no duty to update forward-looking statements. Actual results may differ materially from current projections.

In addition to factors previously disclosed in KeyCorp's and First Niagara's reports filed with the SEC and those identified elsewhere in this communication, the following factors, among others, could cause actual results to differ materially from forward-looking statements or historical performance: ability to obtain regulatory approvals and meet other closing conditions to the merger, including approval by KeyCorp and First Niagara shareholders on the expected terms and schedule, including the risk that regulatory approvals required for the merger are not obtained or are obtained subject to conditions that are not anticipated; delay in closing the merger; difficulties and delays in integrating the First Niagara business or fully realizing cost savings and other benefits; business disruption following the merger; changes in asset quality and credit risk; the inability to sustain revenue and earnings growth; changes in interest rates and capital markets; inflation; customer acceptance of KeyCorp's products and services; customer borrowing, repayment, investment and deposit practices; customer disintermediation; the introduction, withdrawal, success and timing of business initiatives; competitive conditions; the inability to realize cost savings or revenues or to implement integration plans and other consequences associated with mergers, acquisitions and divestitures; economic conditions; and the impact, extent and timing of technological changes, capital management activities, and other actions of the Federal Reserve Board and legislative and regulatory actions and reforms.

Annualized, pro forma, projected and estimated numbers are used for illustrative purpose only, are not forecasts and may not reflect actual results.

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